

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAYBONAVENTURE ISLAND

From historic fishing station to bird
sanctuary and provincial park.

Ken Annett

Note on Bonaventure Island
by Dr. John Mason Clarke for
the XII INTERNATIONAL GEO-
LOGICAL CONGRESS.

Beginning with the south shore of Malbay is a great mantle of red conglomerates and sandstones which covers all the coast regions from here south over the whole Bay Chaleur region, save where it has been torn away by sea and weather and left the underlying formations exposed. The name, BONAVENTURE, was given by Logan and was taken from Bonaventure Island off the coast of Percé which is entirely constituted of these conglomerates...

Bonaventure Island, 2 miles (3.6 km) long, 1 and 1/2 miles (2.7 km) wide and 3 miles (5.4 km) out to sea, is separated from the mainland by a channel in which the tidal currents run heavy. The island is an ancient fishing site dating back to the days of the 16th and early 17th centuries when Basques, Bretons and the men of La Manche came out every year for the fishing, returning to Europe in time for the lenten market.

The rocks of the island are entirely of the Bonaventure conglomerate and represent the upper beds, the basal limestone conglomerates not being present. The island presents a low face on the channel side but the cliffs on the East rise to 400 feet (120 meters) making a noteworthy fault face. These cliffs have added interest because of the large colony of water birds which nest there. The assemblage is not surpassed in size anywhere else in the Gulf except on the celebrated Bird Rocks of the Magdalen Islands that lie 160 miles (288 km) out to sea...



PERCÉ AREA Gaspé Peninsula Québec

MAP SHOWING THE GENERAL DISTRIBUTION
OF ROCK FORMATIONS

LEGEND

RECENT

- 8
- Loose gravel and sand

CARBONIFEROUS

- 7
- Bonaventure conglomerate, sandstone, shale,
a little limestone

DEVONIAN

- 6
 - Gaspé sandstone and shale
- 5
 - Grande Grève limestone
- 4
 - Cape Bon Ami—St. Alban limestone, shale,
siltstone

SILURIAN

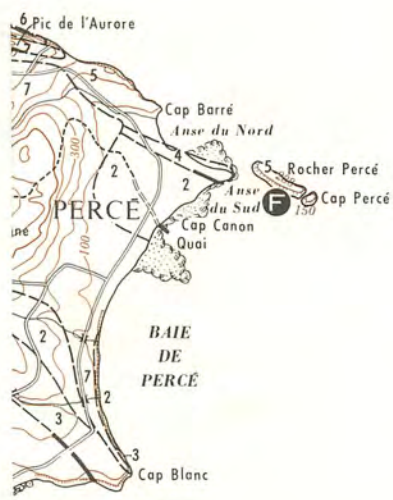
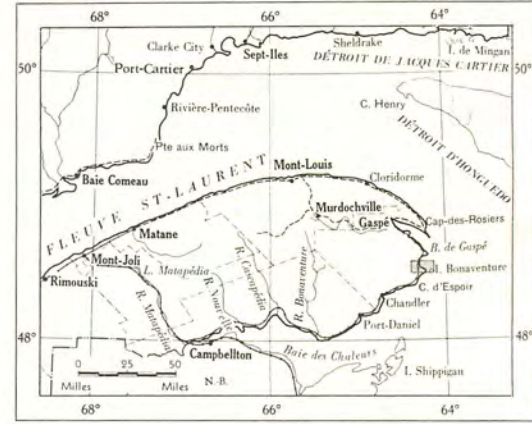
- 3
 - Limestone and limy shale
- ORDOVICIAN
- 2
 - Limestone and limy shale, quartz pebble
conglomerate at the base

CAMBRIAN

- 1
- Limestone

SYMBOLS

- Geological contact
- Fossil locality
- Radio-telephone mast
- Contour interval at 100 feet
- a b
- (a) Motor road, (b) poor gravel road



1 s

Bonaventure IslandThe Amerindian Presence

Long before the mariners and fishermen of Europe crossed the Atlantic and made landfall at Bonaventure Island / Percé, the site was well-known to the Indians of Gaspesia. Some 6000 years ago groups of Indian hunters arrived in the Peninsula from the South and West. Of these the Micmac were the most important group. It is thought that they migrated from the Atlantic region into Gaspesia because of European pressures. These Micmac were skilled fishers of salmon, cod and mackerel which they preserved by the process of smoking. They were also hunters and trappers of ducks, geese, Moose, caribou, beaver, and other fur-bearing animals of the Gaspesian forests. They spent the summer at the shore and in autumn moved to winter camps in the vast Gaspesian wilderness.

Bonaventure Island was well known to the Micmac peoples. In one of their tribal legends the island was the home of the "GOUGOU"- a terrible ogre that lured victims to the island and devoured them. As Sun worshipers the Spring equinox was one of their major festivals and this ceremony has been visualized, as follows, in "SKETCHES OF GASPE" by Dr. J.M. Clarke :

"Ongwe, Chief of the Gaspesian Souriquois, had returned with his people from the winter encampment about the far headwaters of the St. John. Half-buried beneath the snow, their skin-covered cabins had comfortably resisted the season's downfall, and the hunt had brought forth abundance of food and clothing for all the small flock. An early breakdown of the snows was probable, a few bright days had softened them, loosed the ice-setting of the streams, and thus with their peltries the chief had led them back over the trail to the shore much earlier than it was his wont to abandon winter quarters. It lacked but little of the Equinox, to these worshipers of the Sun the most solemn feast of the year. It was seldom that this day of ceremonial found Ongwe and his people so near the coast and at the foot of the Percé mountain. The trail had been long and heavy, for the raquettes sank deep into the softening, sloppy snow. But there

was no spoken expression of weariness, a serene contentment lay in the vivacious eyes which looked out from under the stolid brow of the Sagamo.

It was the feast of the Sun, and long before that orb had flushed the eastern sky with the faintest suggestion of his approach, while the stars still shine with the white fire of burning steel and the shimmering sheets of the aurora lit up the celestial vault, the chieftain aroused his people from their shortened slumber, Sire, seer and lad, maid, matron and babe on back, led by Ongwe, leaving their encampment under the shelter of the sea-wall, trailed slowly through the unbroken snow of the spruce woods up the long northern slope of the great mountain. The difficult passage was made in silence save for the crackling of the twigs and the sharp creak of the frost. Half way up the gentler slope was passed and the steep plateau lowered over them. Turning eastward, the chieftain saw the sun-star, herald of the coming god, blazing his course above the horizon and a low word of urgent command renewed their upward progress. The last hard slopes were finally passed and the gentle floor of the summit was reached as the reddening east betokened the coming of the equinoctial sun.

Standing at the crest and on the edge of the sharp cliff, his people behind him, the Sagamo stood attent. The increasing glow in the east outlined the distant Bonaventure Island and silhouetted the Percé Rock. Over the glistening water, beyond the frozen channel, the soft refulgence deepened into a golden orange. The fires burned, the red cliffs of the mountain caught the warmer rays and the shadowy outline of the sea cliffs at the south became fixed. An arc of gold breached the horizon. As it reached the eye of the chieftain, he threw from him his cloak of castor, his deerskin shirt and clout, and loosed from his feet the mooseskin moccasins. Naked as he was born, and rigid as if dead, he stood in the presence of the Lord of Day. While the sun traversed the skyline, and till its lowest arc rebounded from the lingering clasp of the sea, he stood as if carved from the mountain. When it had cleared itself and the day had begun, the chieftain lifted up his arms extended wide apart in adoration and cried aloud, Ho ! Ho ! Ho ! After him the little multitude behind him thus saluted the god of light and warmth and life, herald of a new summer... "

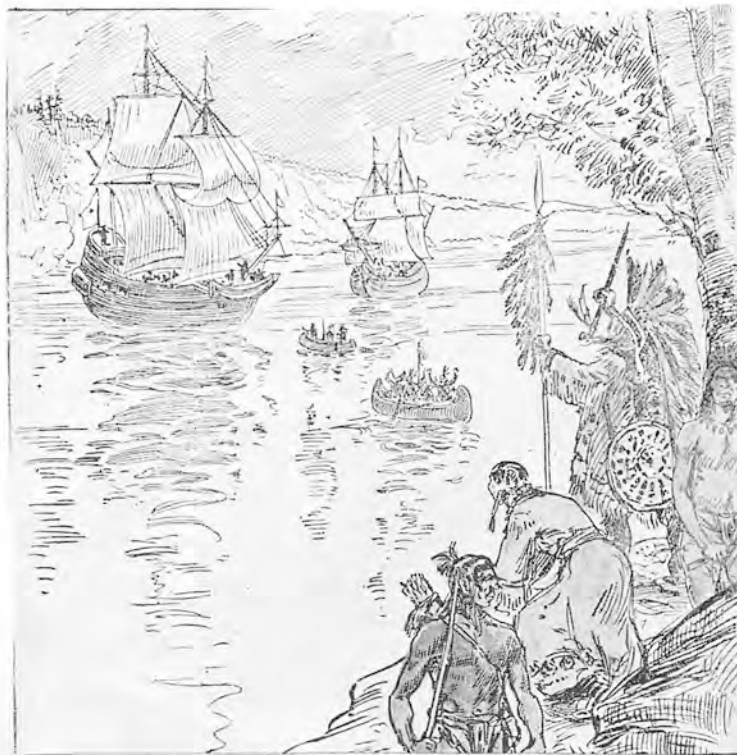
ON THE RECORDBONAVENTURE ISLAND1534 VOYAGE OF JACQUES CARTIER

The first use of Bonaventure Island as a fishing base by Basque and Breton fishermen is unknown but was certainly well before the recorded visit of the Jacques Cartier expedition of 1534.

Cartier had sailed from St.Malo, France in mid-April, 1534. By July 4th he was in Bay Chaleur where his ships anchored at Port Daniel while he explored westward up the Bay almost to Restigouche, noting en route the present sites of Paspébiac, Carleton, Escuminac and Dalhousie. Having established that no sea-way lay in that direction he returned to Port Daniel and sailed eastward along the coast to the Bonaventure Island-Percé location. Here, is an extract of his LOG:

"...Et là trouuames une merueilleuse marée.petit fontz et la mer fort malle, Et nous conuint serrez à terre entre ledit cap (either Cap Blanc or Percé Rock) et une ille qui est à l'Est d'iceluy (Bonaventure Island) enuiron une lieue; et là possames les ancrez pour la nuyt..."

Not only did Cartier spend that night in the lee of the Bonaventure Island-Percé location but the following day he was forced back by wind and storm as he attempted to sail on towards Gaspé Bay. In fact he would not get to Gaspé until almost a week later.





Percé panorama from the Pic de l'Aurore (Peak-of-Dawn). Percé Rock points to Cape Barré and two of Les Trois Soeurs (Three Sisters); Cape Mont Joli is near Percé Rock and Cape Canon is to the right (under the large white house). Bonaventure island in the background. (Photo by Québec Tourist Branch.)

The Bonaventure Formation once extended northwest at least 10 miles from the Percé hills because it forms the flat cap of the conspicuously flat-topped hill at that distance, and which can be seen from the highway on the sand bar at the inner edge of Malbaie bay. It also reached out to sea at least 3 miles, to the outer edge of Bonaventure island. It probably still is connected under water with the island because the island rocks slope gently inland and the mainland rocks slope gently seaward, thus suggesting a gentle basin structure in the rocks under Percé bay; also, the reefs in Percé bay off South Beach are made of Bonaventure rocks.

BONAVENTURE ISLAND
BY THE ABBÉ C.C.ROY
CURE OF PERCÉ
IN HIS "HISTORY OF PERCÉ"

Here is a last heap of rocks, three miles from the mainland. It has been called different things: "immense ice barrier," or "raft in distress" according to Bouchette and Bernard; "an oval green velvet rug" according to Clarke. Actually the Island describes an irregular circle six miles in circumference, which gives one the impression of a giant whale stranded on a reef, its head to the north some four hundred feet high resting upon a submarine pillow three hundred feet thick, its tail lying to the south at water level, its body stretched out motionless in a gentle and regular slope.

Like Mount St. Anne, Bonaventure Island emerged from the prehistoric ocean and then detached itself from the former though retaining the same geological formation. The island was named "Ile Bonaventure" by Cartier in honor of the great "Seraphic Doctor", Saint Bonaventure, whose feast-day he anticipated while he lay at anchor here on the 12th and 13th of July, 1534. (The feast of St. Bonaventure is actually on the 14th of July.)

The island is a natural breakwater against which the waves from the open sea pound with a resounding roar and are shattered into countless eddies and whirlpools of boiling foam. About it are submerged rocks, hidden by waters which formerly teemed with fish (the Island Banks). Bonaventure Ile has certainly meant "Bonne Aventure" (Good Fortune) to the fishermen of yore; it is little wonder therefore that on certain maps and in some writings the island has been designated by the composite word "Bonne Aventure." Scarcely open to the outside world by two small coves, one on the north east capable of accommodating only small boats, and a very diminutive one on the south west, the island is hardly accessible. In fact it is inaccessible during stormy weather. Wooded with spruce and stunted balsam, it is more suitable for the grazing of the sheep than the raising of crops. The population which at one time reached a total of some two hundred souls is constantly diminishing. A scant dozen families now live there, (1947), some thirty souls in all, confirmed islanders, unwilling to be uprooted, stubbornly unresponsive to the call of the mainland. The very rudimentary character of its roads is a sufficient reason for the almost complete absence of horses, just as the poverty of its vegetation explains why there are only a few head of cattle. On the other hand the mutton which comes from the Island is famous among gourmets for its special flavour. A few foxes occasionally show up; they or their ancestors were hardy enough to reach the island by swimming. Nicholas Denys in his *Histoire Naturelle* informs us that in his time, "rabbit-hunting was good, thirty snares set the night before yielding at least twenty rabbits the next mor-

ning; turtle doves abound there because of the quantity of strawberries and raspberries of which they are very fond."¹

Poor in tangible products, the Island of Bonaventure is rich in food for the imagination. The deep anfractuosités which the waves have patiently gouged in its sides and which easily take on the aspect of cavernous grottos, occasionally adorned with stalactites or stalagmites recall sometimes the Blue Grotto of Capri, sometimes the several grottos of the dog or of the wolf, of the king or of the queen in the Pyrenees. These caves in former times are supposed to have served the pirates and corsaires as caches for hiding their booty and their various spoils.

It would seem that a buried treasure was left here which daring searchers came very near finding, had it not been for the itching of one of the associates, more indiscreet than the others, to reveal his impressions: every one knows that the most rigorous secrecy is an indispensable part of the established rite in the discovery of buried treasures.

That Bonaventure Island has witnessed shipwrecks and various maritime disasters, belongs not to the domaine of folklore but to the realm of reality. Listen to what Father LeClercq has to say on this subject:

"To make the dedication" (of the church erected by Brother Didace) "more famous, more impressive, and more magnificent, I had embarked in a canoe with three of our Indians in order to take there whatever ornaments I had been able to find. Bad weather overtook us; the sea changed almost in a moment. A storm of hurricane proportions arose, so furious that it broke and carried away the two ends of our canoe, leaving us waist-deep in water and in eminent danger of perishing to the last man, had it not been for the charitable assistance of our Indians. These natives who were then, happily for us, encamped on the sea shore, became aware of our misfortune. They were so deeply affected that they immediately threw off their clothes and with a generosity that we cannot sufficiently recognize or admire, some rushed quite naked into the sea to swim, and others embarked in their canoes, with such effectiveness that they finally delivered us from the danger in which we had unfortunately found ourselves. Our French captains were pleased to recognize, by generous feasts and presents the good services which these Indians had rendered to their missionaries."

But is it necessary to have recourse to history? There is not a single inhabitant in Percé who is not able to confirm the fact of shipwreck and loss in the neighbourhood of Bonaventure Island.

The points of interest and curiosity throughout the island are not without charm. There is its old chapel built in 1865; a school-house which replaced in 1878 one whose existence has been underlined by Lemoyne; the old fishing station; the promontory where we can approach the birds and they can approach us; and that other promontory, a second Mount St. Michael, from which there is a sweeping view of the ocean.

About the island there are, la Gondole (the Gondola), le Pain de Sucre (the Sugar Loaf), le Sphynx, le Vieux et la Vieille, (the Old Man and the Old Woman); la Grève du Paresseux (Lazy Beach) where formerly some fishermen are said to have gone to refresh themselves when their monotonous labor of turning the drying cod had been rendered too distressing by the ardent rays of the sun.

b) *Bird Sanctuary*

What has attracted universal attention to Bonaventure Island is the fact that it is above all a bird sanctuary, unique both for the great variety of species which take refuge and live there in perfect harmony, and for the facility with which one can reach them by sea and by land. From this derives the fact that of all the bird sanctuaries in the western hemisphere, the one which is most noteworthy, most publicized and most frequently visited is the Island of Bonaventure.

Moreover, following the Convention on Migratory birds in 1919, federal and provincial laws have officially declared this a bird sanctuary under the control of a commission responsible for its care. Since then it has been forbidden to excite the birds in any way by calling through a megaphone, sounding a siren, or firing a gun.

How far back does this invasion of Bonaventure Island by its winged population go? These birds are strongly traditionalist. Once they have settled somewhere they return generation after generation—in saecula saeculorum—unless they are rudely molested. It may therefore be concluded that they must have been there from the earliest times.

Yet Cartier, who elsewhere is so consistent in noting the existence and variety of the birds he saw on the islands he discovered, and who passed a day and two nights in the shelter of the island, says not a word about them. Must one conclude therefore

that at that time the island had not as yet become populated with birds and that these came only later, forced no doubt by circumstances to evacuate their former domain and establish themselves elsewhere? The "Iles-aux-Oiseaux," (Bird Islands) situated about 125 miles farther east of which Cartier speaks have been gradually eroded by the effects of frost and by the action of the sea so that

there is hardly anything left of them today. This would seem to support the above hypothesis. It may be of course that Cartier, having anchored off the north west section of the island whereas the birds live in the south east section, actually had no knowledge of them. This hypothesis would be rather hard to swallow however. For, supposing that Cartier had not seen the birds he would most certainly have heard them.

There is one other hypothesis. There may have been too much fog for Cartier to see them. This might also explain at the same time why he does not speak of Mount St. Anne. But then why would he not mention a fog, which would have been a still greater hazard and consequently more noteworthy than the storm which he does mention?

It would seem therefore that it was the occupants of the "Iles-aux-Oiseaux" mentioned by Cartier who gradually migrated to Bonaventure Isle. "And on the twenty first day . . . of May," writes Cartier, "we sailed as far as the isle of Birds . . . whose numbers are so great as to be incredible unless one has seen them; it is so exceeding full of birds that one would think they had been stowed there . . . There were . . . white ones . . . that keep apart from the rest in a portion of the island and are very ugly to attack; for they bite like dogs. These are called Gannets."

The birds of Bonaventure Island differ from one another in many respects: origin, colour, size, weight, calls, habits of life.

I — Classified by origin and belonging to the following families :

a) Pelican	the Gannet
	the Cormorant
b) Gull	Great Black-Backed Gull
	Herring Gull
	Kittiwake
c) Penguin	Razor-Billed Auk
	Common Murre
	Black Guillemot
	Puffin
d) Petrel	Leach's Storm Petrel

II — Classified by colour :

a) White	the Gannet
	the Herring Gull
	the Kittiwake
b) Black	the Cormorant
	the Great Black-Backed Gull
	the Petrel
c) White & Black	Razor-Billed Auk
	Common Murre
	Black Guillemot
	Puffin

III — Classified by size :

a) Large	the Gannet
	the Great Black-Backed Gull
	the Herring Gull
	the Cormorant
b) Medium	Razor-Billed Auk
	Common Murre
c) Small	Petrel
	Puffin
	Kittiwake
d) Very small	the small Leach's Storm Petrel

IV — Classified by number of eggs laid :

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| a) 3 eggs | the Cormorant
the Great Black-Backed Gull
the Herring Gull
the Kittiwake |
| b) 2 eggs | the Petrel
the Puffin |
| c) 1 egg | the Gannet
the Razor-Billed Auk
the Common Murre
the Petrel |

V — Classified by approximate number :

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| a) 10,000 pairs | the Gannet
the Herring Gull |
| b) 1,000 pairs | the Cormorant |
| c) Some hundreds | the Razor-Billed Auk
the Common Murre
the Puffin
the Black Guillemot |
| d) About a few dozen | the Great Black-Backed Gull
the Kittiwake
the Petrel |

VI — Classified by the hibernating regions :

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| a) In the South Atlantic | the Gannet
the Petrel |
| b) In the North Atlantic | the Kittiwake |
| c) Of this region | the Razor-Billed Auk
the Common Murre
the Black Guillemot
the Puffin
the Cormorant (Icy waters)
the Great Black-Backed Gull
the Herring Gull |

REMARKS

1. The arrival of the birds follows the arrival of the herring and continues from the middle of April to the middle of June. The eggs are laid in May and are hatched in June. The young birds take to the sea, some in July (as the gulls), some in August (as the cormorants), and some in September (as the gannets and the razor-billed auks).

2. The gannets and the cormorants feed their young on food digested in their gullets and kept in an inner sac like the external pouch of the pelican.

3. The majority of birds on the Island feed on good fresh fish for which they dive. Such are for example the gannets, the cormorants, the common terns and the razor-billed auks. Others such as the herring gull feed on anything, fresh fish, refuse, marine worms or shell-fish which they might find on the shore or on the surface of the water since they do not dive.

The gull has a particular method of cracking the hard shell of the crustaceans, such as crabs and various bivalvular creatures which it happens to pick up. It soars in the air holding in its beak the luckless animal, then lets it fall on the stones below as often as need be to break through the hard exterior.

The kittiwake subsists on plant and animal life which it finds only on the surface.

The great black-backed gull alone is both rapacious and lazy. It does not dive but contents itself with devouring everything within easy reach, even the young of other families.

The quantity of fish destroyed annually by the birds on the Island may readily be estimated at several thousand tons, which does not seem to do any harm to the fisheries. Each gannet is supposed to eat its own weight of fish daily.

4. The penguin with which we are concerned here has no connection with the other penguin which belongs to a definite species found in warm climates.

5. The puffin is the quaintest of sea-birds. It has the face of a clown with a beak all the colours of the rainbow shading from blue-grey to pale yellow and bright red. Added to this it is decked out, to all appearances, in a black frock-coat with a white waist coat.

6. The birds on the Island are not generally edible. Judging however by the hunting which used to take place, the contrary would seem to be true. Professor Béchard has left us the following description: "The eggs hatch towards the middle of July. At the beginning of August, the young birds which scarcely know how to fly, dive into the sea, or rather let themselves drop into it, to bathe: Once their young wings are wet, they rise with difficulty from the water, and more often have to wait for the sun to dry them before they can fly. It is then that they are hunted; so numerous are they that often they are killed with oars or sticks. This amusing hunt usually takes place from four o'clock to nine o'clock in the evening, nor is anything finer or more exciting. The boats, generally handled by three men, a hunter and two rowers, skim over the water and cross in front of each other in every direction; some strike down their prey with blows of their oars while others, with admirable skill, shoot on the wing those of the young birds that can fly. The older birds become excited and fly around over the heads of the cruel hunters with cries of distress. The running fire of the guns, whose echoes resound from the rocks of Percé, raises a cloud of gulls and cormorants, which together emit a variety of piercing and deafening cries. It is not unusual to see hunters return with thirty or forty birds to a boat after only a few hours of hunting. These birds provide a delicious and very choice dish."

7. It is not without interest to point out that in addition to the birds which summer here and pass the winter elsewhere, there are also those which pass the summer in other parts and winter here.

ACROSS THE YEARSSOME BONAVENTURE ISLAND HIGHLIGHTS

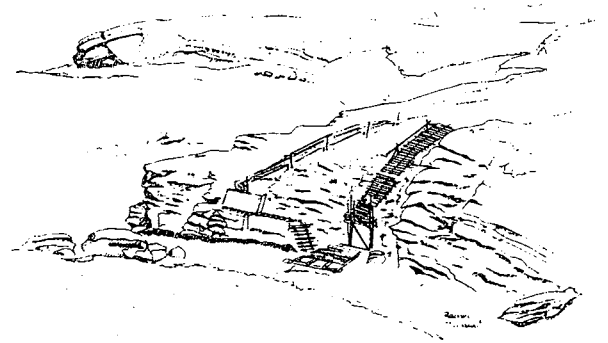
- c.1500 Start of a century and a half of "nomadic" fishery by Basque, Breton, Norman, Rochelais and Portuguese fishermen of Western Europe in Gaspesian waters. Arriving in Spring they cured the cod, that they caught, on the beaches of Gaspesia and returned home in the autumn loaded with marketable fish. Bonaventure Island and Percé were important landmarks for these early fishermen.
- c.1600 Samuel de Champlain who was personally familiar with the Bonaventure Island / Percé fishery, promoted it as a source of food for the new settlements along the River St. Lawrence.
- c.1650 With the appointment of Nicholas Denys as Governor of Gaspesia in 1653 began the influence of the Denys family as Seigniors of Bonaventure Island / Percé. [Ref. "GASPE OF YESTERDAY" NO.39 THE DENYS FAMILY.]
- 1685 Chapel of St. Claire consecrated on Bonaventure Island.
- 1690 New Englanders, part of the expedition of Sir William Phipps against Port Royal and Quebec, sacked and burnt the shipping, chapels and homes of Bonaventure Island / Percé.
- 1698 The French Government failed to act upon the recommendation of Count Frontenac, Governor of New France, to fortify the Bonaventure Island / Percé fishing station. In the words of the Abbé C.E. Roy - "...From 1690 to 1760 there was no serious attempt to restore the establishment at Percé. Fishing on a nomadic basis did not likely re-appear to any considerable extent. The exposed situation of Bonaventure Island and of Percé, on the one hand, and, on the other hand the state of war and of piracy which existed almost constantly at that time between France and England, rendered it too precarious and too hazardous..."

- 1711 The arrival in Gaspesian waters of the Royal Navy Squadron commanded by Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker escorting the fleet of transports bearing the land forces for the proposed conquest of Quebec typifies the recurrent threat to the French fishery.
- 1758 After the conquest of the great French fortress of Louisbourg, the Gaspé Expedition, commanded by General James Wolfe, and operating out of Gaspé Bay, proceeded to raid and destroy the French fishing stations in Gaspesia.
With the Fall of New France to the British in 1760 a new era opened for the development of the fishery.
- 1787 Lieut.-Gov. Nicholas Cox was granted Bonaventure Island.
- 1798 The Janvrin Company of Jersey established a fishing station on Bonaventure Island.
Captain James Stewart, brother of Matthew Stewart, Seigneur of Shoolbred, also had a fishing station on the Island of Bonaventure.
- c.1815 Capt. Peter Du Val and his partners, Philip Godfray, John Le Gresley and Nicholas Du Val had a fishery with its base on Bonaventure Island. (Ref.- "GASPE OF YESTERDAY" NO.77 CAPTAIN PETER DU VAL AND FAMILY.)
- c.1820 The fishery firm of Hamond Dumaresq and Company established on Bonaventure Island.
- 1845 LeBoutillier Brothers (David, Amy and Edward) extend their fishery to Bonaventure Island, with the purchase of the interests of John Godfray. The firm was in business until 1923.
- 1919 Bonaventure Island declared a bird sanctuary by the Canadian Government.
- 1971 The Quebec Government acquired title to the private property on Bonaventure Island to create a provincial park, the last residents having left c.1965.

SOME DATES

- 1685 Construction of the first chapel dedicated to St. Claire.
- 1690 Destruction of the chapel and other buildings by Phipp's flotilla.
- 1777 First official census: 44 persons.
- 1808 Report by the surveyor, Bouchette, 4 families well established.
- 1831 ~~Maximum~~ Maximum population: 172 persons
- 1845 Arrival of the LeBoutillier Bros., a Jersey company.
- 1857 Gift by George Aubut of a piece of land for the chapel and cemetery.
- 1860 Construction of a chapel dedicated to St. Anges
- 1926 Bankruptcy of LeBoutillier Bros.
- 1931 8 families.
- 1964 Within the memory of man, this is the first winter that no-one stayed on the island.
(John Paget, Novembre 1963).
- 1971 The Island becomes a Park.

Ile Bonaventure Park



REFLEXIONS ON AN ERA...

*Four centuries ago,
European fishermen,
Venturesome and hardy,
left their native land,
to conquer new fishing banks.*

*Bonaventure Island saw
many of these sea farers,
more nomad than sedentary,
who followed one after another
and competed in the difficult
trade of fishermen.*



*At the beginning of the 19th century,
a population of fishermen became a reality.
They came from Jersey and Ireland
to practice a noble trade.*

*At dawn they looked to their
boats and their nets.
When the day was good
the fishermen returned to the beach,
to the accompaniment of a thousand gulls.
The cod is the manna for these people
Opener, Gutter, Slicer, Salter
Beach boss, able tradesmen,
they repeat the ancient gestures.*

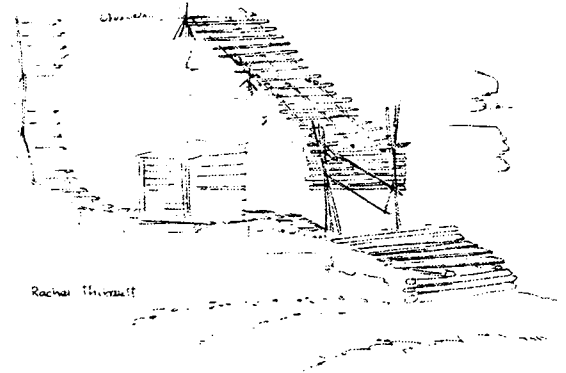


*The company LeBouthillier Bros.
establishes on the island,
A Jersey company,
Serious, effecient, organized.
They own a dozen buildings
where was stored the fish,
fishing equipment, merchandise*

*They hired people from everywhere
Quebec, Montmagny, Cap Saint-Ignace...
Fishermen and labourers
lodged humbly
in tiny houses
furnished by the company.
Some stayed here,
seduced by the charms of the island
or those of some young lady.*



*The people of the island dealt
with the LeBouthilliers
Buy, sell, they go in debt,
unworried about bad days
because the company manager
kindly invites them to a party
at his house.*

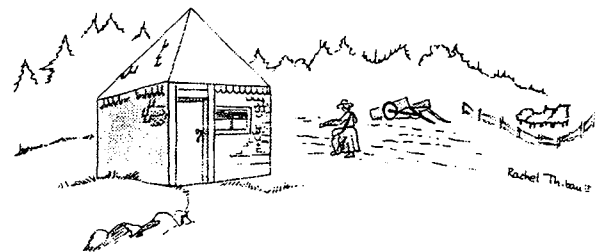


*An new society was built,
large families, people happy
to live simply on the island,
which they hoped to shape,
but which shaped them.
It was a beautiful period.*

*Stubborn fishermen
became farmers.
With sea-weed and fish remains
They fertilized the poor land.
A cow, a few sheep
and they were rich.*

*The LeBouthilliers put the tiny isle
on the world map.
Cod from here, caught by the sweat
and labour of our people
goes to Brazil, the Mediterranean.
England and Jersey.
After 80 years of activity,
after the good years
came the bad days
and everything collapsed.*

*To survive, the people of the island
did not consider their troubles
or misfortunes.
They laboured from dawn
to dusk.*



*A small school
received several generations
of tanned and tumultuous children.
A humble chapel
permitted this people of the sea
to reflect a moment.*

*Capable with his hands,
the inhabitant mastered all trades.
Living force of this island
the women did all tasks.
Jams, gardens, and home spun
held no secrets for her.*

*There no doctors
but, capable midwives
to deliver children
and treat them gently
with herbs and syrups*

*Alone on their island,
they felt big and
untameable.
They are called, Brochet,
Duval, Maloney, Mauger, Paget
and through the years
they built an era.*

*The winds of the 20th century
tripped them up
and upset them forever.
They die, they leave
but they had been happy.*

*This island is now yours
its secrets, its beauties
are your responsibility,
Give her a chance to live on.*



*Texte : Madeleine Bisson
Chantal Soucy*

Illustrations : Rachel Thibeault

Montage : Mario Charest